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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An extendable and contractable steering column apparatus for a vehicle including an outer column through which an inner column is slidably inserted, a lock housing portion formed on the outer column, and a locking mechanism that includes a pair of movable pieces slidably fitted within a ~~cylinder~~ bore formed through in the lock housing portion in a vehicle body widthwise direction, a screw rod passing through said pair of movable pieces, and an operation lever disposed at an end portion of the screw rod, wherein ~~to shift~~ said pair of movable pieces is shifted toward each other so as to press said inner column and ~~to shift said pair of movable pieces away from each other so as to release the pressure on said inner column, in response to swinging of an~~ said operating lever, and wherein a cross section of the ~~cylinder~~ bore of the lock housing portion is non-circular and cross sections of

said pair of movable pieces are also non-circular correspondingly.

2. (New) An extendable and contractable steering column apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said lock housing is integrally molded with said outer column.

3. (New) An extendable and contractable steering column apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said outer column is formed of die cast molded aluminum.